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SOUTH RUSSIA IN THE PREHISTORIC AND CLASSICAL PERIOD

THOSE historians, both Russian and foreign, who endeavored to trace the outlines of the history of Russia, used to begin with the formation of a Scandinavian-Slavonic state at Kiev on the Dnieper in the ninth century A. D. This starting-point was determined by our historical tradition. The first Slavonic annals, compiled by monks of the Kiev monasteries, began to chronicle at this epoch the transactions of what was destined to become Russia, and modern historians were only too willing to follow the same path.¹

But by this method many vital questions of early Russian history remained unanswered and obscure. How could such an entirely uncivilized nation, as the Slavonic tribes were agreed to be, have had power to convert in a very short time the foreign conquerors—the Scandinavian ruling class—into pure Slavs in speech and customs? How could the state of Kiev develop such a brilliant civilization as that which has been made evident by recent excavations there?² How is one to explain the relations between the late Roman, that is, the Byzantine state and this new Slavonic kingdom on the Dnieper? How are we to understand the possibility of such a speedy development of the Christian faith in this new state? What were the reasons for the spread of the Kiev civilization throughout the different Slavonic and Finnish tribes in southern and central Russia?

It is clear that our Slavonic annals could not give an answer to these questions, though they are of the first importance. On the other side the Byzantine historians paid almost no attention to their northern neighbors and foes and were satisfied to record the various conflicts between the different northern tribes and the armed forces of Byzantium. The late Romans of this dark period had many

¹ See the last general treatments of Russian history, V. O. Kluchevski, *A History of Russia* (trans. by C. J. Hogarth), vol. I. (London and New York, 1911); S. Platonov, *Lectures on Russian History* (last edition, Petrograd, 1917; in Russian).

² Count T. Tolstoi and N. Kondakov, *Russian Antiquities*, vol. V. (St. Petersburg, 1897); N. Kondakov, *The Russian Treasures* (St. Petersburg, 1896); J. Grabar, *History of Russian Art*, vol. I., *Architecture* (Moscow, 1909). Reports of the new excavations in Kiev carried out by D. Mileev are printed in the *Reports of the Archaeological Commission for 1908-1915*; cf. *Bulletin de la Comm. Arch.* for the same years.

misfortunes to record, and the various important processes which developed behind the curtain of different Germanic, Iranian, and Mongolian tribes, who carried with them other tribes and peoples, remained unknown and uninteresting to them.

It is evident that the answer to the questions which I have sketched above *exempli causa* can be given only by investigating the successive stages of cultural development in South Russia at the time of the great migrations, at the time of the Roman Empire, and backward to the times of the first relations between South Russia and the classical peoples of the East and West. For this period our written documents are scanty and one-sided. The only full and impartial evidence is that which has resulted from the archaeological investigations in South Russia. But although the archaeological material gathered by generations of investigators is very abundant and very important, the scientific exploration of it has lagged far behind the accumulation of these unwritten documents.

Classical scholars endeavored to explain the scanty mentions of South Russia in the classical historical tradition (chiefly in Herodotus), and classical archaeologists dealt with the products of classical art found in the remains of towns and the cemeteries of Greek cities on the shores of the Black Sea, merely with the desire to elucidate the evolution of Greek life, art, and religion in these remote corners of the Greek world. The remains which were found in the graves of the native population of South Russia were studied mostly by students of prehistoric times, and no links, except Herodotus's description of the burial customs of the Scythians, were discovered between the native population and the Greek cities. Orientalists paid but little attention to the various Oriental tribes, who formed the main population of South Russia for centuries, because there were such scanty remains of their language. It is a recognized fact that most Orientalists were and still are pure philologists.

Thus no successful attempt was made to combine all these different sources and to trace a history of South Russia as a whole. And I must emphasize the statement that only an attempt of this comprehensive kind could, if not elucidate (which requires many special studies and a vast knowledge of comparative materials), at least endeavor to bring the different questions to a possibility of solution, by pointing out the tasks which are the most important and clearing the path which is to be followed.

The ground for undertaking such an investigation has been well prepared by generations of scholars. The classical evidence has been collected, as regards both the literary sources and the inscrip-

tions, by B. Latyshev, who also prepared from the writers of the Byzantine epoch a full collection of quotations dealing with South Russia. The history of the Greek colonies on the shores of the Black Sea has been made clear by many scholars, both Russian and foreign. Numismatic evidence has been and is being carefully registered and classified by eminent numismatists such as Berthier de Lagarde, Oreshnikov, and others. The Bolshevik revolution, stopping the whole civilized life of the country, prevented the publication of a corpus of Greek coins of the Black Sea colonies by Retovski and myself.

Enormous progress has been made in the archaeological investigation of South Russia. First French, and afterwards Russian, scholars began a systematic archaeological exploration of the sites of the Greek cities on the Black Sea, an exploration both of the remains of the towns and of the cemeteries, and it went on without interruption till the beginning of the Bolshevik revolution. Splendid work has been done for the Dorian colony Chersonesos (near Sevastopol), for the Ionian colony Olbia, at the mouth of the Bug and Dnieper, and for the vast cemeteries of the centre of the Bosphoran state, Panticapaeum (the modern Kertch).

Still more important perhaps have been the results of the excavations of the thousands and thousands of barrows found all over the steppes of South Russia. Interest in these excavations was awakened by the remarkable results achieved in the middle of the past century by Zabielin and Tiesenhausen on the lower Dnieper, and in the delta of the river Kuban, the so-called Taman peninsula. They succeeded in discovering a set of graves which were, without doubt, those of native kings or princes, and which yielded an enormous harvest of golden and silver vases, jewelry of the finest kinds, richly adorned horse-trappings, etc. After this brilliant beginning discoveries followed one another almost without interruption. The most important of them were made by the indefatigable energy and great skill of the late Professor N. Vesselovski, who year after year opened barrow after barrow and filled the Museum of the Hermitage in Petrograd with many thousand of objects, all of the greatest scientific and artistic value. His fields of activity were the steppes on the lower course of the Dnieper and the valley of the Kuban. At the same time the shores of the middle Dnieper and its eastern affluents were explored systematically by many Russian scholars, among whom the leaders were the president of the Archaeological Commission, Count A. Bobrinski, and the keeper of the Archaeological Museum at Kiev, V. Hvoika. I cannot deal more at

length with the history of the archaeological discoveries made during the last fifty years in South Russia. A full account may be found in the recent book of Ellis H. Minns, *Scythians and Greeks*.³ I will only point out that all these discoveries were followed by careful reports and by many attempts to give a general account of the whole mass of archaeological evidence collected during half a century of systematic investigation. Books such as the famous *Antiquités du Bosphore Cimmérien*, the well-known *Russian Antiquities* of Count Tolstoi and Kondakov, the three big volumes of Count Bobrinski on his excavations near Smela, and the volume of Minns cited above, are and will be for generations so many sources of trustworthy information.

And yet no real attempt has been made hitherto to trace the history of the country as a whole and to combine this history with the historical evolution of the ancient world in general. The task in itself is a very difficult and complicated one. South Russia, from its geographical position, is a land of different influences, coming from the north, the east, the south, and the west, and fusing into one in the vast open steppes on the shores of the great Russian rivers. Through the Caucasus South Russia was in uninterrupted communication with the great Eastern monarchies. One of the monarchies—that around the lake of Van⁴—was almost the immediate neighbor of the tribes who occupied the valley of the Kuban. We are just beginning, thanks to the recent discoveries of Russian scholars, to understand how great was the importance of this mighty monarchy in eastern history during the last millennium B. C. and how intimate was its connection with South Russia and the Caucasian tribes. Through the steppes on the shores of the Caspian Sea Russia was largely open to the influences and migrations, first of Iranian and then of Mongolian tribes. The great Russian rivers formed an unbroken link between the steppes of South Russia on one side, and the Ural mountains, and also the forests, swamps, and

³ (Cambridge, 1913; see *Amer. Hist. Rev.*, XIX. 843-848.) He gives also a detailed bibliography of Russian and foreign works published on the subject during the last century. Cf. my two articles, "L'Exploration Archéologique de la Russie Méridionale de 1912 à 1917", in the *Journal des Savants*, n. s., XVIII. 49-61, 109-122 (March-April, May-June, 1920).

⁴ On the history of the Vannic kingdom, Hall, *The Ancient History of the Near East* (1913), p. 516; B. Turaiev, *History of the Ancient Orient*, II. (1912), 26 (in Russian). Excavations during the war brought to light new and very important inscriptions indicating relations between Van and Javan (N. Marr, *Bull. de l'Acad. des Sciences de Petrograd*, 1918) and artistic monuments of great value; see Pharmakovski, *Materials for the Archaeology of Russia*, XXXIV. (1914), 45 ff.

lakes of Central and Northern Russia, on the other. In the west, no natural obstacles hindered a free intercourse between South Russia and the valley of the Danube, as well as Central Europe in general, and in the south the vast and navigable Black Sea attracted the keen daring sailors of the Mediterranean from time immemorial.

And yet we have no right to affirm that South Russia was a land of continuous migrations, an open corridor for newcomers from the east and the west. The steppes of South Russia are so rich both as pastures and as arable land, the rivers are so rich in fish, and the forests on the northern edge of the steppes so full of game, that every newcomer to South Russia did his best to stay as long as possible in this Eldorado both for nomads and for settled dwellers.

Therefore the history of South Russia is very complicated and the aspects of its cultural life are very varied. But the task of the investigator is at least not hopeless, for most of the peoples who settled in South Russia stayed for long centuries and left behind them various traces of their life.

I will now endeavor to give a short account of the different stages of the political, social, and artistic development of South Russia during the prehistoric and so-called classical period, *i. e.*, till the epoch of the great migrations. My aim, in this short article, is not to depict historical life as it developed on the shores of the Black Sea, but to point out, in the light of evidence furnished by the archaeological excavations, classical authors, and epigraphical and numismatic monuments, the most important problems which arise from the study of these documents. An attempt to answer these questions more fully, from the point of view of universal history, will be shortly given by me in my forthcoming book *The Iranians and the Greeks in South Russia* (Oxford, Clarendon Press).

The first problem of general significance is presented to the historian by the recent discoveries, in the valley of the middle Dnieper and of the lower Bug, of very important remains of neolithic and eneolithic (first copper period) villages and burial-places with peculiar and artistic painted ceramics. The painted pottery and the clay statuettes (human beings, animals, models of houses, and sacred vessels), found mostly in ruined buildings of a peculiar nature—half burial-places, half funerary shrines—which were surrounded by reed and clay walls and covered by a roof, belongs to a large class of similar pottery called by the students of prehistoric life “the pottery of spirals and meander”.⁵ This pottery is found over a

⁵ The last treatise on the problem, Höernes, *Urgeschichte der Bildenden Kunst in Europa* (second ed., 1915), pp. 284 ff. and 604 ff.

large area in the southern part of Central Europe. Similar painted vases, but different in both technique and ornaments, have been found in Thessaly and in Crete. Asia Minor is also full of remains of similar pottery which seem to be connected with the artistic painted pottery of Elam, Babylonia, and Turkestan of the same epoch rather than with the European pottery of the "spirals and meander". It is worthy of note that the Elamitic and Mesopotamian remains are in close connection with sherds of similar vases found by Sir Aurel Stein in heaps all over Seistan and Baluchistan. The question of the relations between the European pottery and that of Asia is hotly debated, no agreement having been reached on the problem. Polygenists (*e.g.*, Pottier⁶) affirm a simultaneous appearance of similar phenomena in different places, monogenists (*e. g.*, Wilke⁷) speak of migrations or commercial intercourse. South Russian discoveries have complicated the question instead of clearing it up. The South-Russian, Galician, and Rumanian group of this pottery appears to be the most richly developed European group, more similar to the Asiatic than to either of the other European series. The problem of this island of Asiatic pottery in Europe still awaits its solution and is made the more difficult by the fact that no pottery of this kind has been found either in the eastern part of South Russia or in the Caucasus. It is necessary to conjecture the existence of some links with Central Asia through Asia Minor. The resemblance between Elam and South Russia is too close to be accidental.

An important fact which may be deduced from the existence of this early centre of advanced civilization in South Russia is that already at this epoch the valley of the middle Dnieper was a land of settled dwellers, in no case nomads, who had reached a high standard of civilized life.

Still more important is the observation that the middle-Dnieper centre of civilization was gradually absorbed by a much lower civilization of nomadic type which is characterized by burials in the form of barrows. These barrows cover graves of different forms, with red-colored skeletons in the contracted position. But before being absorbed the middle-Dnieper civilization strongly influenced the nomads, brought them partly to settled life, and created for them a peculiar pottery with incised and painted decoration, highly developed. We observe this phenomenon chiefly in the steppes between

⁶ *Mémoires de la Délégation en Perse*, XIII. (1912).

⁷ "Spiral-mäander Keramik und Gefässmalerei", in *Mannus-Bibliothek*, vol. III. (1910).

the Dnieper and the Don, but it may have had a much wider development.

This fusion of the two types of civilization cited above had already taken place at the time when metals began to be in common use, first copper, afterwards bronze. The first knowledge of metals came to the steppes on the northern shores of the Black Sea not from the west, but from the east. It was in the valley of the river Kuban that a metallic civilization of a high standard was first developed in South Russia, at the same epoch when a similar civilization was brought about in Mesopotamia and Egypt. Many finds in large barrows on the river Kuban, especially one in a grave excavated by Vesselovski in Maikop, have furnished us with many artistic golden and silver objects made with the greatest skill and a highly developed technique, in no way inferior to those which were found in Babylonia and Egypt belonging to the same age. I have devoted to these finds a special article.⁸ The main questions which we have to decide after having studied the monuments I have mentioned are: are they contemporary with the finds in Egypt and Babylonia, and if so how are we to explain their similarity to those of these regions, and also their points of difference? My own opinion is that the two series are contemporary, that no intercourse can be proved, and that therefore we have to suppose an independent beginning of civilized life in a place whose geographical conditions are not unlike those of Babylonia and Egypt.

The exploration of South Russia and especially of the Kuban valley has not been systematic enough to make it certain that the lack of finds belonging to the pure bronze period is not accidental, whereas the central and southern Caucasus on the one hand and the Hungarian plain on the other are full of remains of this period, a fact which would lead us to expect some finds of the same date in the northern Caucasus and also on the Dnieper. It must be taken into consideration that the bronze age in the Caucasus shows very similar features to those which characterize the copper age in the Kuban valley.

But as matters are, we have no traces of a highly developed bronze age in South Russia. From the copper age we come almost directly to the early iron age, *i. e.*, to the first millennium B. C. Of that epoch two facts of primary importance must be recorded: the appearance both in the southern Caucasus and in South Russia in general of two waves of invaders—first of Cimmerians, and after-

⁸ M. Rostovtsev, "L'Age de Cuivre dans le Caucase Septentrional et les Civilisations de Soumer et de l'Égypte Protodynastique", in *Revue Archéologique*, XII. 1-37 (July-October, 1920).

wards of Scythians. The question, who were and whence came the Cimmerians, is a crucial one. Cimmerians are a people well known both to the Oriental and to the Greek historical tradition. The former records their prolonged fight against the Vannic kingdom first and the Assyrian kings afterwards, beginning at the end of the eighth century B. C., and their triumphal march through Asia Minor, which brought them into collision with Lydia and the earliest Greek towns in Asia Minor. The second knows of their conquest of the Greek towns in Asia Minor on the one hand, and, on the other, of their long stay on the shores of the Black Sea, in the Crimea and the Taman peninsula. The Bosphorus was, according to this tradition, the starting-point of the Cimmerians for their invasion of Asia Minor. Both are fully acquainted with their rivalry with the Scythians and with the final victory of the latter both in South Russia and in Asia Minor. The facts are well known and I need not insist on them.⁹

Now we may ask: who were the Cimmerians, how long did they stay on the shores of the Black Sea, what was the influence which they exerted on South Russia, and have we any remains of their sojourn on the Black Sea? I cannot deal with all these questions at length, but I must mention a few facts of primary moment. The best-informed and earliest Greek traditions unanimously affirm that the Cimmerians were of Thracian origin. Modern historians partly prefer to urge the occurrence of some Iranian names among the Cimmerian rulers and to make them near relatives of the Scythians, their bitterest enemies. I may notice a third hypothesis, that of Posidonius. False and imaginary etymologies and the desire to explain some verses of Homer caused him to identify the Cimmerians with the Cimbri and to advocate their northern origin. But nobody took into consideration, first of all, that the historical tradition of the future kingdom of the Bosphorus implied a prolonged stay of the Cimmerians on the shores of the Black Sea, pointing out that many places on the straits of Kertch preserved the name of the Cimmerians, especially the straits themselves which were called Cimmerian Bosphorus. Secondly, nobody has explained the fact that the population of the future kingdom of Bosphorus, and in particular the ruling classes, bore partly Thracian names, and that the first rulers of Panticapaeum—a Milesian colony—were all Thracians. The

⁹ The best summary of our Oriental evidence is given by M. Streck, *Assurbanipal*, etc. (Leipzig, 1916, *Vorderasiatische Bibliothek*), p. ccclxxi; cf. Olmstead in *Cornell Studies in Hist. and Pol.*, II., and in *Amer. Hist. Assoc., Ann. Rep.*, 1909 (Washington, 1911); and E. Meyer, *Geschichte des Altertums*, I, §§ 452 ff. I. 2³, § 529.

usual suggestion, that these rulers were Thracian soldiers invited by the Greek population to defend them against the Scythians, is historically impossible and explains nothing. In the third place I would insist on the evidence of some early remains in the future kingdom of Bosphorus which are similar to those in Hungary and in Asia Minor, especially at Troy. All these facts seem to corroborate the earliest Greek traditions and to establish the probability that the Cimmerians were of Thracian origin. This fact does not involve their having come from the Balkan Peninsula. We do not know how old is the Thracian population in the Balkans, and we may doubt that it was autochthonous. The solution of this problem may be found when we are better acquainted with the Thracian language, which is practically unknown, and with the early ethnography of Central Asia. As far as our present knowledge goes, we cannot eliminate the hypothesis that many tribes of Central Asia may claim a close affinity with the Thracians, in the first place the Massagetae. Less probable is the supposition that the Thracians came from Central and Northern Russia or through those countries from the shores of the Baltic and the North Sea.

However, the Cimmerians were obliged to yield their place in South Russia to Iranian new-comers, the Scythians, who probably dragged with them some Mongolian tribes. Though the Scythians were always treated by the historians of the ancient world as a kind of negligible quantity, as a barbarous nomadic tribe which belongs entirely to the domain of prehistoric studies, the results of the excavations in South Russia show the Scythians to have been a factor of some importance in the political development of the ancient world and to have had a comparatively wide influence on the growth of civilized life in Eastern Europe in general.

Let us bring some facts to support my statement. The Scythians formed in South Russia a stable and strong state which lasted for almost four centuries, from the seventh to the third century B. C. The existence of this established state was the chief cause of the splendid development of the Greek colonies on the shores of the Black Sea, who rivalled in wealth and their high standard of material civilization the Greek cities of Asia Minor—vassals of the Persian kingdom.

Although organized as a nomadic and military state, the Scythians were in no way hostile to the settled life of tribes conquered by them and to the material development of the Greek cities, their tributaries. The former supplied them with corn, fish, metals, and furs, the latter purchased these goods from the Scythians, paid for

them in manufactured products partly imported from their mother-country, partly made by themselves, and thus gave Greece an opportunity of providing herself with food-stuffs for her population and raw materials for her industry. We must not forget that for centuries South Russia fed a large part of the Greek countries, and that Athens was able to develop her high standard of civilized life because of regular importations of food-stuffs and raw materials from South Russia which allowed her to devote her energy to arts, sciences, and industry, and to build up her power.

On the other hand, under the influence of Greece, Scythia raised her own civilization to a comparatively high level. Having brought with them their peculiar tastes and habits, their original style in decorative art—the so-called animal style—the Scythians did not drop their peculiarities under Greek influence.¹⁰ They not only made the Greeks work for them, adapting themselves to Scythian requirements and thus developing new abilities, but learned from the Greeks their skill and employed this fresh knowledge to build up their own art on new lines. Through Scythia civilized habits penetrated into Central Russia and acted as a stimulus to creative independent work among the South and Central Russian peoples. We do not know whether there were Slavs already among them. But even if the Slavs came to Russia comparatively late, they certainly absorbed the cultivation of their predecessors.¹¹ It is a matter of further study to follow closely this process of the spread of the Greek and Graeco-Oriental civilization through the medium of Scythians in Russia and in the Balkans, cradles of the future Slavonic states,¹² but even now the results of archaeological excavations show us how widely the Scythian influence extended and how flourishing was life on the banks of all the Russian rivers during the centuries of Scythian domination.¹³ In itself the Scythian state

¹⁰ On the Scythian animal style see the recent work of C. Schuchhardt, *Alturopa in seiner Kultur und Stilentwicklung* (Strassburg and Berlin, 1919).

¹¹ See on these questions the valuable series of works published by the Finnish scholar A. M. Tallgren, enumerated in his last two volumes: *Collection Tovostine* (Helsingfors, 1917), and *L'Age de Bronze en Russie: la Civilisation d'Anan-jino* (Helsingfors, 1919).

¹² Recent excavations in Bulgaria have brought to light some graves of the fourth century B. C. with objects imitated from Scythian originals; see B. Filow, *Römische Mittheilungen*, XXXII. (1917), 1 ff.; G. Kazarow, *Beiträge zur Kulturgeschichte der Thraker* (Sarajevo, 1916).

¹³ Large towns with large cemeteries are found all over the region of the middle Dnieper and its eastern tributaries; see the above quoted work of Count A. Bobrinski, and *Drevnosti Pridneprovja* (*Les Antiquités de la Région du Dniéper*) by B. and V. Khanenko. On the lower Dnieper scores of small towns and villages, half-Scythian, half-Greek, developed along the river. See Goszkie-

presents many interesting features. We already know that the Scythians were Iranians. Iranians in general are but little known to us. And yet how far-reaching has been their influence on the classical world! What an opening for study, along with the greatest Iranian power—Persia, another Iranian state of entirely different mould, a state strong enough to challenge the Persian world-domination and to induce Darius to undertake a dangerous expedition into the steppes of South Russia! This opportunity of study is given to us by the ever increasing archaeological material, through which we can form an idea of the religious, social, economic, and political life of the Scythians. Finally, the Scythian state was a model on which later Asiatic states in South Russia were organized, and a thorough knowledge of it enables us better to understand the later nomadic states—dangerous rivals and foes of Slavonic Russia who again succeeded at the epoch of Tartar invasion in ruling an important part of the Russian land.

I have already pointed out that the existence of a stable Scythian kingdom in South Russia gave the Greek settlers the opportunity of founding many important centres of civilized life on the northern shore of the Black Sea. The most interesting of these is the Bosporan state on the straits of Kertch—a waterway uniting the Black and the Azov seas. The growth of this state is a phenomenon which calls for serious attention.¹⁴

From time immemorial traces of civilized life have been found on both shores of the straits. Different highways of international trade converged here and this convergence caused the inhabitants to take an active part in the exchange of goods coming to their doors from the north, east, and south. Gold, copper, iron, furs, slaves, fish, and leather were carried by caravans across the steppes of West Siberia and South Russia, by small boats on the Don and the Sea of Azov, and by ships on the Black Sea to this natural meeting-place—the Bosporan straits. No wonder that here was the centre of the Cimmerian kingdom and that after the fall of that kingdom the Scythians struggled hard for possession of it, nor that they encountered a strong resistance in the native population, a resistance reinforced by Greek colonists attracted by the great opportunities of the district. No wonder, again, that the old inhabitants welcomed the coming of Greek settlers who helped them to defend their independence against Scythian attacks. In this way were

vicz. *Bull. de la Comm. Arch. de Russie*, XLVII. 117, and M. Ebert, *Prähistorische Zeitschrift*, V. (1913).

¹⁴ See the valuable study of E. von Stern in *Hermes*, L. (1915).

founded the scores of Greek colonies which soon covered both shores of the straits. The most important were Panticapaeum on the Crimean shore and Phanagoria on the Caucasian. Common interest soon united these two groups with each other and with the native tribes. The scattered Greek towns and the indigenous population little by little sought and found a *modus vivendi* which allowed them to form a strong community, able to uphold its independence. Thus arose the Bosporan state, a compromise between the tribal monarchical organization of the aborigines and the Greek self-governing bodies.

It is a matter of great interest to trace the development of the new community. A loosely knit confederation of cities and tribes in its beginnings, it became gradually a political body of dual nature. The ruler of this body was for the Greeks an elected magistrate, for the natives a king ruling by divine right. Notwithstanding this apparent dualism, however, the constitution of the new state became gradually a purely monarchical one. The Greeks in the mother-country were fully aware of the fact and called the Bosporan archons and kings—tyrants. It was hard for the Greek colonists to give their support to these tyrants, especially as the tyrants were not Greeks but Hellenized natives. But the constant threat of Scythian supremacy overcame their repulsion to monarchical rule, and thus tyranny, which in Greek surroundings never lasted longer than one or two generations, stood firm in Bosporus for hundreds of years. This tyranny entered into diplomatic and commercial relations with the Greek world and was treated by the Greek states as a desirable friend. We must not forget that the tyrants of Bosporus disposed of all the corn produced in the country watered by the rivers Kuban and Don and in the Crimea and also of all the fish of these rivers and of the Sea of Azov, the Scythians having no commercial fleet and no ports of their own. Thus the kingdom of Bosporus became rich and mighty, with a peculiar social and economic organization akin to that of different Hellenistic states which gradually arose out of the monarchy of Alexander in the Orient.

The growth of the Bosporan kingdom out of a combination of two different types of state-life—the tribal monarchy and the Greek free city—led to a peculiar dualism not only in the state; both its social and economic organization and its material civilization were also deeply affected. Rulers who were also extensive landowners, surrounded by a ruling aristocracy of feudal type and a city-population of retail traders, ship-owners, and craftsmen, present a social picture of great historical interest. Although pure Greek by

origin, the inhabitants of the Greek cities in the Bosporan kingdom, governed as they were by a half-native dynasty, could not long remain purely Greek in life, habits, and religion.¹⁵ Everywhere, in all branches of civilized life, they were strongly influenced by their surroundings, especially as regards art and industry. Working for tribes of non-Greek race, the Greek settlers naturally adapted themselves to the tastes of their clients, and thus built up gradually a new style both in architecture and in decorative art. Take, for instance, the monumental graves of the Bosporan aristocracy, with their mighty step-vaults, which remind one of the famous grave of the Atreidae. Look at the beautiful gold coins with their masterly heads of the local rural divinities transformed into Sileni and Satyrs, and again at the remains of their painted tombs and at the peculiar jewels and vases which they made to satisfy the requirements of their neighbors. Everywhere you will find new features which cannot be explained by purely Greek analogies. But still all these products remain Greek both in workmanship and in style.

Students of art ought surely to pay more attention to this branch of Greek art than they have hitherto done. They will learn by this study how infinitely varied Greek art could be and how ready were the Greek artists to grapple with new tasks and to comply with new requirements. They eagerly studied Scythian and Maeotian life, the dresses, the arms, the social and religious habits of these tribes, the forms of their sacred vessels, etc., and used this fresh knowledge to create splendid works of Greek art. They ennobled primitive forms of vases, arms, and horse-equipment, and adorned them with lively scenes of a slightly idealized life of the Scythian and Maeotian tribes, in the spirit of the Stoic school and Ephorus. The ground for the best achievements of Hellenistic and Roman art in artistic ethnography was first prepared by Bosporan artists and craftsmen working for Iranians, whom they had themselves educated in the appreciation of Greek art and thus enabled to understand the best creations of Greek genius.

A new factor came into the life of South Russia through the appearance in the steppes of fresh tribes of conquering invaders—the Sarmatians.¹⁶ They moved slowly from the east, crossed the

¹⁵ See my paper, "The Idea of the Kingly Power in Scythia and in the Bosphorus", in *Bull. de la Comm. Arch.*, XLIX.; cf. *Revue des Études Grecques*, 1921.

¹⁶ No good general work on the Sarmatians exists. See E. Täubler, *Klio*, IX. (1909), 14; J. Kulakovski, *The Alans according to the Testimonies of Classical and Byzantine Writers* (Kiev, 1899); M. Rostovtsev, *Ancient Decorative Painting in South Russia* (St. Petersburg, 1913), pp. 326 ff. and 340 ff.

rivers Ural and Volga, and already in the fourth century B. C. were approaching the Don. The Scythians were forced to yield before them, to evacuate the region on the Kuban, and to fall back on the right bank of the Don. At the same period political conditions in the west enabled the Scythians to resume their offensive against the Thracian tribes, checked at the end of the sixth century by Darius and afterwards by the buffer-state of the Odrysae—a creation, like the Bosphorus, of Athens during the period of her greatest expansion. In this way arose the mighty western empire of the Scythians of the fourth and third centuries B. C., with a military and political centre on the Dnieper, instead of the former eastern centre which must be conjectured to have been situated on the western shore of the Sea of Azov. The Scythian power spread widely westwards and northwards and firmly held the lands along the middle Dnieper and its affluents and the whole tract of flat land between the Dnieper and the Danube, including the delta of the Danube—the Dobrudja.

However, this last period in the history of the great Scythian kingdom in South Russia was but of short duration. The Sarmatians soon resumed their victorious advance and already by the middle of the third century B. C. a variety of new political factors put an end to the expansion of the Scythians westwards and northwards. The most important of these new factors was the conquest of the Balkan Peninsula by the Celts.¹⁷ Weak Scythian vassals in Thracia, with no support from outside, could naturally by themselves organize no effective resistance to the Celtic advance. On the other hand the Scythian kingdom, weakened by Sarmatian attacks in the east and by a long struggle with the powerful Macedonian kingdoms in the west—especially under the strong rule of Philip and Alexander—was obliged to leave its Thracian vassals to their own fate. Thus the Celtic advance from the north found hardly any resistance and was followed by chaos, not only in the Balkan Peninsula but also in South Russia. We must not forget that after the death of Lysimachus the political balance of the Greek world shifted definitely from Macedonia to the eastern Hellenistic monarchies, and that Macedonia, the chief promoter of Hellenism in the Balkans, was in constant political convulsion and thus unable to fulfill its chief task—the defense of Greek civilization from northern invaders.

Some inscriptions found in the Greek colony Olbia—the most

¹⁷ The last comprehensive work on the Celts in the Balkan Peninsula was published by G. Kazarow, "The Celts in Thracia and Macedonia", in *Transactions of the Bulgarian Academy*, XVIII. (1919).

important harbor for the export of the produce of the valleys of the Dnieper and the Bug and therefore in constant relations with the Scythian kingdom—supply us with decisive evidence of the conditions in the western part of the Scythian kingdom in the beginning of the third century B. C. I refer especially to the long decree in honor of Protogenes, a rich merchant of Olbia and member of one of the few families who preserved and increased their wealth during this troubled period. It appears from this decree that the great king of Scythia, Saitapharnes, concentrated his forces on the Dnieper, that he lost his hold on his different vassal-kings between the Dnieper and the Bug, and that the whole swarm of these petty princes fled hastily eastwards and southwards before the coming storm of Celtic and German invaders. I am convinced that such a state of things could only have been brought about by some serious blows inflicted by the Celts on the great Scythian kings somewhere between the Dneister and the Bug.

The Celts of course did not remain in South Russia. They were attracted by the enormous wealth of Greece and Asia Minor and concentrated their efforts on the task of penetrating into these districts. But the Scythian power could not recover after the heavy blows which it had suffered from the Celts, and was unable to hold its own against the different Illyrian, Thracian, and Germanic tribes who invaded South Russia. Moreover the conditions in the east became worse and worse. The Sarmatians, as I have already mentioned, crossed the Don early in the third century; in the second they reached the Dnieper and in the first the whole of South Russia was full of Sarmatian tribes moving westwards.

The consequences of these events were exceeding important for the history of the ancient world. The Scythians retired to the Crimea and began to press hard on the Greek towns trying to find an outlet for their commerce. The kingdom of Bosphorus and the Chersonesos were unable to defend themselves from the Scythian pressure. The Bosphorus especially suffered severely, both from the Sarmatians who settled on the Don and the Kuban and occupied the peninsula of Taman and from the Scythians in the Crimea. Anarchy, which reigned in the steppes, almost entirely checked the profitable trade of the Greeks and exhausted the accumulated wealth of the Greek cities with contributions extorted by the Scythians and Sarmatians and with payments to hired soldiers. The wave of oriental invaders seemed to doom Hellenism in South Russia to a final fall.

Nevertheless this fall did not come; it was delayed for some cen-

turies. Instead, civilized life began to flourish anew in the Greek cities and once more advanced deeply into the steppes of South Russia. The reasons for this development were, on the one side, the character of the new conquerors of South Russia—the Sarmatians, and on the other the political development of the Orient in general which brought South Russia under the sway of the nascent and developing Roman Empire. Let me deal first with the Sarmatians.

Like the Scythians, the Sarmatians were of Iranian descent. For centuries they remained probably in Turkestan, where they were in close relations first with the Persians and afterwards with the different half-Greek states created in the East by Alexander. These links were not broken after the beginning of the westward movement of the Sarmatians. We have every reason to suppose that they remained in touch both with the Parthian kingdom and with Central Asia. From Turkestan the Sarmatians, who were by no means wild barbarians, brought a powerful military organization, excellent weapons, civilized habits, and a strong taste for artistic objects both of Persian and of Central-Asiatic manufacture, from which sprang germs of artistic development among the Sarmatians themselves.

Thus the Sarmatians went to South Russia thoroughly prepared to take the place of the Scythians both in their political and in their commercial relations. They were nevertheless unable to succeed in creating in the steppes of South Russia a centralized state like that of the Scythians. They remained divided into different independent tribes, sometimes fighting one against another, but usually separated by intervening heterogeneous tribes.

Though unable to regenerate the Scythian state, the Sarmatians inherited all the traditions of Scythian commercial and political intercourse, especially with the Greek cities. Like the Scythians in their best epoch they did not seriously contemplate the eventual conquest of the Greek cities. They made no single attempt of this sort, though the occupation of Olbia and Tyras would have been in no way difficult. They preferred to enter into close commercial relations with the Greek cities, to impose on them their tastes and habits, to make Greeks work for them and to pay for the Greek goods with the products of their agriculture and commerce. We must take into account that the Sarmatians, like the Scythians, did not break up the agricultural exploitation of some parts of South Russia by the native population, and endeavored to maintain commercial relations with Persia, Central Asia, India, and China. The results of this policy

were: the possibility of existence and development for the Greek cities, the gradual infiltration of Sarmatian elements into them, and the birth of a new artistic style out of the collaboration of Greek artists and Sarmatian employers. We will deal with the first two points later; let us say now a few words about the third.

The Sarmatians brought with them from their native country two things which they required from the artists who worked for them. Besides asking for the weapons and jewels which they were accustomed to use, they insisted upon having these ornamented in a fashion always characteristic of the Iranian East: I mean the ornamentation by means of inset colored stones and enamels, and the use for this ornamentation chiefly of geometric designs and figures of animals.¹⁸ These requirements were willingly accepted by the Greek artists and thus there arose in the Greek towns an entirely new artistic style in jewelry and toreutics, the so-called polychrome style, often combined with the animal style. The history of the gradual development of this style in South Russia is of first importance for the history of art in medieval Europe. I cannot deal with this problem at length, but I must emphasize that I can prove that the so-called Merovingian or Gothic style in jewelry and toreutics developed gradually out of the elements brought by the Sarmatians and handed over first to the Greeks on the Black Sea and afterwards to the Goths who invaded South Russia from the north. All the successive steps of this development can be traced in South Russia, and scores of monuments, sometimes of the greatest artistic value, enable us to study this development in all its phases. I will mention only some important finds, such as the recent finds near Orenburg (third to second century B. C.), those of the Kuban region and the Taman peninsula (second century B. C. to second or third century A. D.), of the Don (especially the treasure of Novocherkassk, first century B. C. to first century A. D.), of Western Siberia (rich gold jewels and horse-trappings of the same epoch), of Rumania (the treasure of Petroasa), all of the more ancient period, and some of the later epoch, such as the finds of Kertch (beginning with the second century A. D.), of the South Russian steppes (first to third century A. D.), of Rumania, Hungary, Austria, Germany, France, Britain, Spain, North Africa, which all form an uninterrupted chain whose rings are linked together by identical style, similar technique, and the shape of the objects. It is the same track which the Sarmatians themselves followed in their gradual advance towards the west.

¹⁸ A detailed treatment of the evolution of the polychrome style will be given in my forthcoming book, *The Iranians and the Greeks in South Russia*.

On the other hand, the Sarmatian animal style, after having adopted many peculiarities from the Scythian animal style, perceptibly influenced central and eastern Russia and, through their medium, northern Europe, thus originating both in Russia and in Scandinavia a peculiar animal style which held its own in these countries for centuries and the influence of which can be traced in the Romanesque and so-called Gothic style in central and southern Europe.

Though not hostile to Greek civilization, the Sarmatians were a great danger to the Greek colonies on the Black Sea.¹⁹ Nobody in these colonies knew that the Sarmatians had no intention of destroying or conquering. On the other hand, as I have already pointed out, the Scythians under the pressure of the Sarmatians became more and more insolent and threatened the Greek cities with destruction. The Greek colonies, unable to defend themselves, naturally looked in every direction for protection. But the second century B. C., when the Sarmatians expanded with exceptional energy and the Scythians succeeded in forming once more a strong state in the Crimea under the sceptre of Skilurus, was a troubled epoch in the history of the ancient world. Of mighty protectors there were none in the East, all the more or less Hellenized kings in the Orient being either vassals or clients of Rome, and Rome itself, involved as she was in an internal, ever-growing struggle, was in no way anxious to support the Pontic Greeks against their enemies. This is the explanation of the fact that the Pontic Greeks sought and found help from the most dangerous foe Rome had in the second century B. C., King Mithridates of Pontus, a half-Iranian dynast of high ambition. Everyone knows the history of the struggle between Rome and Mithridates. Everyone remembers that Mithridates made his last stand in the Bosporan kingdom, and that he was betrayed here first by the Pontic Greeks and afterwards by his own son.

The consequences of the temporary rule of Mithridates over the whole of the Crimea were momentous in the history of South Russia. Mithridates endeavored to organize the whole eastern Iranian world, including Scythians, Sarmatians, and Thracians, against Rome. After his death Rome was thus faced with the possibility of a renewal of the Mithridatic attempt, and understood clearly that a consistent policy towards the Parthians could not be carried out without

¹⁹ On the history of South Russia in the Roman epoch, see E von Stern, in *Hermes*, L. (1915), 211, and my own papers, "Pontus, Bithynia, Bosporus", in *Annals of the British School at Athens*, XXII.; "Caesar and the South of Russia", in *Journal of Roman Studies*, 1917, pp. 27 ff.; "Queen Dynamis of Bosporus" in *Journal of Hellenic Studies*, XXXIX. (1917) 88.

first settling conditions not only on the southern shore of the Black Sea but also on the eastern and northern. The former indifference of the Romans towards the Black Sea was now transformed into a lively interest. Caesar, Augustus, and their followers all watched attentively over the Greek colonies on the Black Sea and did their best to consolidate their influence over them and to help them in the constant struggle against the Scythians and Sarmatians. Greek settlers on the Black Sea, threatened by the Iranian danger, were reliable vassals of the Romans, strong advanced posts of Greek civilization standing like islands, amidst the Iranian sea, and excellent spies who, in their own interest, kept the Romans informed of all the new events in the Iranian world. We must take into consideration that already in the first century A. D. Sarmatian vanguards had come into conflict with the Roman troops on the Danube. Hence the policy of Rome to transform the kingdom of Bosphorus into a vassal state, the Greek free cities into Roman "allies".

After some vicissitudes and waverings during the first century B. C. and the first century A. D., Rome achieved her aim and the Bosphoran kingdom became for centuries her vassal. But this Bosphoran kingdom was no more the old state of the Spartocides. The neighborhood of the Sarmatians and Scythians and the rule of Mithridates had borne fruit. Bosphorus and the other Greek cities were no longer purely Greek.

I have already pointed out that Mithridates relied chiefly upon his Iranian allies and his half-Iranian subjects in the Pontus. He filled up the Greek towns with them and assigned to them influential posts and large holdings of land. Seeing that the Greeks did not welcome his rule, he tried to bring into the Greek cities more trustworthy elements. It is probable that he was the first who transferred a large body of Jewish settlers to the Bosphoran kingdom. No wonder that he left Bosphorus with a large admixture of foreign intruders. His successors had to reckon with this state of things. They were themselves not Greek. The dynasty reigning over Bosphorus during the first three centuries A. D. were descended from the union of Dynamis (daughter of Pharnaces, son of Mithridates, by one of his foreign wives) and a Sarmatian or Maeotian prince, Aspurgus, son of Asandrochos. Aspurgus himself married as his second wife a Thracian princess, Gepaepyris. Thus the Bosphoran dynasty evidently was not Greek at all, but half-Iranian, half-Thracian. And we must not forget that this dynasty ruled over a combination of a few Greek towns and many native tribes, and depended in its wars partly on city levies, but chiefly on hired or

conscript native soldiers. Under these conditions the Bosphoran kingdom inevitably became more and more barbarian, *i. e.*, Iranian, as the native civilization was chiefly Iranian, although the native tribes were of varied origin—Iranians, Thracians, Caucasians. We wonder, not at the fact of this Iranization, but rather at the amazing phenomenon of the pertinacity of Greek language, Greek habits, and Greek thought among a population in whom Greek blood flowed more and more scantily and among whom even Greek personal names became exceptional. It is remarkable that these barbarian citizens of the Bosphoran towns boasted of their Hellenism and tried to convince everyone, against all evidence, by keeping alive Greek traditions, Greek education, Greek language, and by maintaining a kind of cult for Homer and Plato, that they were really descended from the Milesian and other Greek settlers on the shores of the Black Sea.

This Hellenism, however, was but a pious camouflage. The citizens of the Bosphoran towns in the second and third centuries A. D. were not in any respect different, except as regards the official language, from the Hellenized Scythians and Sarmatians, their neighbors. Students of social and economic life should pay more attention than they have hitherto, to the economic and social conditions of the Bosphoran kingdom at this period. These conditions did not change very much as compared with those of the Spartocid period. But they became more like the feudal organization of the Scythian kingdom and the several Sarmatian tribal states. The study both of the sculptured funereal stelae, found by the hundred in Kertch and recently published by Kieseritski and Watzinger,²⁰ and of the painted funereal chambers and vaults of Panticapaeum, collected and investigated by myself,²¹ as well as the study of the furniture of thousands of graves which have been opened in the Bosphoran necropolis, shows that the Bosphoran kingdom was, like the Scythian and Sarmatian state, a kind of highly organized military community of landowners and traders, who ruled over a native population of serfs. Some of the neighboring tribes recognized the supremacy of the Bosphoran kings and were their vassals, as they themselves were vassals of Rome; some were their allies or their enemies. The great wealth of the ruling Bosphoran aristocracy depended entirely on their exploitation of the rich soil of a part of the Crimea and the Taman peninsula and on their trade with the Greek and Roman

²⁰ G. von Kieseritski and C. Watzinger, *Griechische Grabreliefs aus Südrussland* (Berlin, 1909).

²¹ M. Rostovtsev, *Ancient Decorative Painting in South Russia* (St. Petersburg, 1913); *cf. Jour. of Hell. Studies*, XXXIX. (1919) 144 ff.

world, *i. e.*, on their command of the sea routes. This command, which was upheld at all costs by the suzerains of the Bosphorus—the Romans—was the chief reason why the Sarmatians never thought of destroying or capturing the Greek cities. They perfectly understood that such destruction would mean a complete cessation of the importation of all manufactured goods, to which they had become more and more accustomed.

I cannot deal at length in this short article with all the curious peculiarities of the social, religious, political, artistic, and intellectual life in the Bosphorus during the first three centuries A. D. Broadly speaking, we meet everywhere the same phenomenon: a thin Greek shell and a hard native kernel. The coexistence of these is characteristic of the whole epoch and of many provinces within the Roman empire. But in no other case have we to deal with so enduring an organization, with such a fulness of historical evidence, and with such a combination of Greek and Iranian elements. I must emphasize that if we want to know anything about the social, political, and cultural structure of the greatest enemy of Rome—the Parthians—we must begin by a careful study of the Bosphorus, and if we would understand the Sassanid renaissance of the Iranian creative genius we must attentively watch the signs of a similar renaissance—in art, religion, and political ideas—in the Bosphorus in the second and third centuries A. D.

This renaissance was diverted into a different channel by a strong advance towards the Black Sea on the part of German tribes from the north—the Goths. But it was precisely this advance and the mixture of Gothic and Irano-Greek elements in South Russia which made this Iranian renaissance in South Russia of not merely local but universal importance. The germs of Iranian culture—the strongest and most creative of the civilizations then existing in the ancient world, as the Graeco-Roman was dying out—were not confined, as in the case of Sassanid Persia, within the boundaries of one state. These germs were not brought to Europe by weak and intermittent currents of trade, but they were conveyed by conquering tribes into the whole of Europe. They there formed the civilization of Western Europe in general, for they were the foundation of the civilization of the ruling classes in Europe, of those Goths, Vandals, Sueves, and afterwards Huns, who were so closely connected with Sarmatians and who had no civilization of their own.

For the development of Slavonic states in Russia and the Balkan Peninsula the history of the Bosporan kingdom, interwoven as it is with the history of the Scythians, Sarmatians, Goths, Scytho-Goths,

and Sarmato-Goths, has still greater significance. The Scandinavians who organized the political life of the first Slavonic states known to history, in South Russia, followed a path already well defined by the Basternae, the Goths, and their followers. And in Russia they met with the same fate. Like the Goths, they adopted *en bloc* the higher civilization which they found firmly established on the banks of the Dnieper, and they inherited all the relations between the Dnieper basin and the South and the West which had been formed during centuries and centuries of friendly intercourse. We have only to study more closely than has been done the antiquities of South Russia during the period of migration, *i. e.*, from the fourth to the eighth century, to become aware of the uninterrupted evolution of Iranian culture in South Russia through these centuries. If the Byzantine empire at this epoch appears more and more Iranized, that comes not only from its relations with Sassanid Persia, but chiefly from the Iranization of its immediate neighbors in the Balkan Peninsula, from the type of civilization which was brought to Constantinople by the so-called barbarian troops, and from the characteristics of the ruling aristocracy which consisted chiefly of the elements furnished by these barbarian troops. The Slavonic state of Kiev presents the same features, not because the Slavonic princes imitated the Byzantine emperors and adopted their art and habits, but because the same cultural tradition—I mean the Graeco-Iranian—was the only tradition which was known to South Russia for centuries and which no German or Mongolian invaders were able to destroy.

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